

Victory Signs in the Darkness

by Marguerite Bouvard

The young people are sitting in a café
sharing their stories, intimacy,
and red wine, and gathering
at a concert in Bataclan music pulsing

in their veins, and sharing
their excitement at a sport stadium,
another generation enjoying
the simple pleasures

of every day, when suddenly
a burst of explosions shatters
their lives. The massacre was meant
to kill an embrace, music that lifted them

to the sky, and the joy that united
them, by those who invented their
name to draw the disaffected
with false promises, who see

victory in shattered corpses,
the breath of people's screams,
a river of blood, and seek to drown out
the voices of those who do not want

the law of the jungle. But after
the week of sirens and police streaming
through the streets, Paris
regained its voice, as the cover
of Charlie Hebdo shows
a bullet-riddled man spouting
champagne, with the words,
"They have the weapons. Screw them.

We have champagne," and the young
people flock to their cafes again
because nobody tells a French person
what to do, and a powerful voice

demolishes the massacre—a young man
who lost his wife and remains
alone with his tiny son
pronounces a true victory,

"You will never get my hatred.

If God whom you blindly
killed made us in his image,
each bullet in the body of my beloved wife

is a wound in his heart. So I won't give
you the victory of my anger
which would be the same
ignorance that has defined you.

You would like me to sacrifice
Liberty for security. My wife
will accompany my son and I
everyday, and we will meet

in a paradise of free souls.
Everyday my son will answer you
with his happiness and freedom,
and you will not receive his hatred."